

Expansion techniques essay



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As an interpreter for the Deaf, the job of the interpreter is to ensure the line of communication between the hearing client and the Deaf client is open and understood. There are many different methods that can be used by the interpreter to ensure they do an outstanding job in relaying both messages to each party in need of an interpreter.

One way to ensure this is expansion. There are several expansion techniques used by an interpreter to convey the meaning of the hearing person such as; contrasting, faceting, reiteration, explaining by example, using 3-D space, scaffolding and describe, then do. Contrasting technique is used by comparing two things, often one that is true and one that is false or visa versa. Research done on “ High Context (ASL) v. s.

Low Context (English)” by Shelly Lawrence of John A. Logan College, IPP, states that, “ The signer body shifts to the non-dominant side, states or describes something, then contrasting it with the opposite idea. ” Humphrey and Alcorn use a good example of this technique in their book, So You Want to be an Interpreter , my car is not new, it is old. (P. 217. This technique applies the emphasis to the old car and it is clear that the car is not new.

This technique is often done without the knowledge of the interpreter, almost as if it were just a natural part of signing. Adding Sign Synonyms (Faceting) in which information is more clearly expressed or weight is given in certain concepts by the use of several synonyms to express an idea or piece of information. (217.) An example of this application used in an interpreting situation would be if a Deaf person were buying a house and the cost of the interpreter were written in the mortgage loan. Now, the interpreter being

neutral, they couldn't point this out to the Deaf individual as it could conflict with their Code of Ethics but they could say, "Read Contract, Read." With the emphasis on the word read; this would convey the message that the buyer of the house should look over the contract extensively to make sure everything is in order and as agreed upon before they sign the contract and pay interest on the interpreter that cost fifty dollars that day over the span of thirty years.

Signs that are continually repeated within a text to show importance are called reiteration. Repeating the sign shows emphasis that something is important whether it be culturally significant, important to clarify the point or has a high emotional impact on the presenter. Brenda Aron of Seattle Central Community College uses a good example of this in her article, "Expanding the Balloon": ASL Expansion Techniques, I waited in a long line forever, LONG-LINE WAIT tt FOREVER. This emphasis on long line gives the impression that the wait was at least a few hours if not all day. The most used expansion technique is 3-D space according to Shelley Lawrence, SCS, CI and CT, SC; L.

In her article for RID Views: "Expansion and Compression." She goes on to state, "Because of the gestural nature of ASL, space is employed the moment a signer lifts his/her hands. Space is utilized referentially and topographically." A person, place or things can be used referentially, for example: the boy is going to the store. In ASL it might be signed BOY HE STORE GO, point of reference is the boy and store.

Since the sentence is set up we know that the boy is in one location and the store is in the other; meaning that if questions like, what is the boy going to buy at the store, the space where the boy and the store are located is their point of reference and all one would have to do to refer to either of them is point to that location in space. After being established in space, they are reinforced in a variety of ways including pointing to the location, using directional verbs, eye gazing and applying classifier predicates and role assumption, which is also referred to as constructed speech and reported action. Sometimes ASL signers want to point out specific information and one way to do this is through topicalization. (15.) “ The topic, or prominent information (ie.

, the subject or object of the sentence), is placed at the beginning of the sentence and is accompanied by a nonmanual sign. ” (Linguistics of American Sign Language. P. 85-86.) Again, these nonmanual signs can be shoulder shifting, pointing to that referenced location, eye gazing, directional verbs, applying classifiers and role assumption.

Topographical or spatial mapping can also be used to represent how objects look in the real world or from different perspectives. Spatial mapping or topographical is the use of the area above, in front of and to the sides of the signer. Space is used to recreate a scene, or describe a layout in 3-D form. (Shelly Lawrence.) Linguistically speaking there have been three categories recognized in this area, “ a miniature view whereby the referents are made to be models of the real world using semantic classifiers, A view that is natural or “ life-size” using role assumption and body classifiers and a view

that uses shared space; both the signer and audience occupy the same space so the signer may point or gesture to references in common space.

” (Lawrence, Shelly. (15.) Having a miniature view as well as natural could be used in describing a lake, or as a class activity “ On the Corner” was a good example of using all three linguistic categories. It isn’t possible to talk about 3-D space and not use classifiers.

“ Linguists have found that there are at least two types of classifiers: (a) classifiers in which a particular hand shape (with a particular palm orientation) is used to represent a noun and can indicate the location of that noun and its actions, if any, and (b) classifiers that illustrate certain physical features of a noun as well as indicate its location in space. Better known as SaSS. Cokely. P. 287) Classifiers can be people or places like the store and the boy going to the store. They can also represent things like a car going down the street or water trickling down a stream.

Classifiers can help paint a picture and give a clearer view and concept of what’s going on. Since one word of the English language can have many meanings, interpreters rely heavily on classifiers to convey the meaning and give the Deaf individual an accurate account of a situation. (p. 289-290.) A series of signs that are grouped together to form a concept that adds background or contextual information to make it clear is called scaffolding. 1.

) This is one way an interpreter can expand vocabulary. There are many ways to use scaffolding like explaining by example, contrasting or explaining the concept, 3-D spacing and explain by example are just a few. Scaffolding is known to be one of the hardest features to identify in ASL text because it

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is so natural. “ For example, to get to the idea of sewer pipes, one must begin with a toilet flushing, then the waste being carried off and finally, the flowing of waste into a large horizontal cylindrical conveyance. ” (4.) A few examples of words that need to be scaffolded include: poetry, theatre arts, and classical literature.

Explaining by example or listing is also a way of scaffolding. Some things that could be explained by example are types of fruit or vegetable, different kinds of dogs, and different types of cars. When the signer shifts perspectives from third to first person is an example of describe then do. The information is repeated from a different perspective of the narrator to the character. In ASL this is common since it is such a visual language and is experienced a lot. An example of this is: we ran from one field to the other and as we passed each other we slapped hands.

Interpreters as well as Deaf people use this technique often and it is a natural way to expand on a concept or actions. Through expansion techniques interpreters are able to keep the line of communication open for both Deaf and hearing people. Most interpreters use contrasting feature, faceting, reiteration, explaining by example, 3-D space, scaffolding and describe, then do techniques

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